

VZCZCXRO0222
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHAK #1318/01 1501550
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 301550Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2321
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA// IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// IMMEDIATE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/425ABS IZMIR TU//CC// IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU IMMEDIATE
RUEPGAB/MNF-I C2X BAGHDAD IZ IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001318

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/29/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY WORRIED ABOUT TRANSFER OF SECURITY
RESPONSIBILITY IN NORTHERN IRAQ

REF: BURR-NARDI EMAIL 5/29/07

Classified By: Ambassador Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Senior Turkish officials and MPs have expressed deep concern about the May 30 handover of security responsibility in northern Iraq from MNF-I to the KRG. The Turks' main concerns appear to be about control of the Iraq-Turkey border, but also extend to an apparent expansion of what Turks already view as very significant Kurdish autonomy. The handover also seems to have taken the GOT by surprise. End summary.

¶2. (C) MFA Undersecretary (D-equivalent) Apakan pulled the Ambassador from a May 30 meeting with GOT Special Envoy for Iraq Celikkol to express Turkey's urgent desire for clarification of the handover of security responsibility from coalition forces (CF) to the three northern (Kurdish) provinces of Iraq. Apakan repeated questions Celikkol had asked, namely:

--What is the Peshmerga's relationship to the Iraqi Security Forces, which under the constitution has sole responsibility for securing Iraq's borders?

--Under the handover, who is responsible for providing security in these provinces and for securing the borders?

--Is security responsibility being handed to Peshmerga when the issue of integrating militias into the ISF has yet to be solved?

¶3. (C) Celikkol cited Iraqi Kurdish media stories which apparently characterize the handover as from CF directly to the Peshmerga. He asserted that handing control to the Peshmerga would be like assigning the Jaysh al-Madhi brigade to secure Karbala or Najaf. Apakan added that such a transfer of authority could complicate the Turkey-Iraq border security cooperation agreement of 1946. This agreement, Apakan stated, contemplates a "state to state relationship, not a "state-Peshmerga" one.

¶4. (C) Ambassador noted that D/CHOD GEN Saygun had inquired about this issue the previous day, and that we would seek further guidance and answer the Turks' questions ASAP. Based

on guidance from Embassy Baghdad, Ambassador later passed the following to the MFA for Celikkol and Apakan:

-- Security for the three provinces in the KRG region is being turned over to the KRG police, the Guards of the Region and the Iraqi Army pursuant to a decision of the Iraqi Ministerial Committee on National Security.

-- KRG police will report to the KRG MOI, as they do now.

-- Guards of the Region are the reconstituted Peshmerga forces that are in the process of being integrated into a security force that is consistent with the national government forces in other regions.

-- The Iraqi Army reports directly to the Ministry of Defense in Baghdad.

-- The MNF-I posture does not change. Korean troops stationed in Erbil and limited American contingents will remain in place for now.

-- The border troops are and will remain in the control of the central government and report directly to the MOI in Baghdad. Responsibility for the border therefore remains with the central government per the Iraqi constitution.

15. (C) Celikkol expressed appreciation. He added with frustration that KRG and other Iraqi Kurdish websites are trumpeting the transfer of power from CF to the Peshmerga and labeling this another step toward Kurdish independence. Celikkol said this adds greatly to political problems that

ANKARA 00001318 002 OF 002

the government's Iraq policy faces, especially in light of the PKK problem, recent F-16 incursions into Turkish airspace, and the charged atmosphere in domestic politics generally.

16. (C) Senior ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) MPs told us May 30 that this story as portrayed in the Turkish press -- essentially as a significant enhancement of Iraqi Kurdish autonomy with KRG control of the Turkey-Iraq border -- will play into the hands of nationalists and hard-liners here. While we appreciate the press guidance provided to us in ref email, it likely arrived too late for us to head off what promises to be a nasty press cycle, and in any case appears to be more tailored for American media than for Iraq's neighbors.

17. (SBU) The MFA Spokesman, also on May 30, sought to calm the waters in his weekly press briefing by emphasizing that Turkey believed CF were handing over authority to the ISF, not to any particular ethnic group, and that CF had done the same in a number of other Iraqi provinces.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON